

Message Text

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SUBJ: VIOLENCE AND FRAUD MAR RULING PARTY BY-ELECTION VICTORY

REF: KARACHI 2300

SUMMARY: FORMER SIND MINISTER PYAR ALI ALLANA, OF THE RULING PAKISTAN PEOPLES'S PARTY (PPP), SCORED AN OVERWHELMING VICTORY OVER INDEPENDENT SYED SAEED HASAN IN THE DECEMBER 28 KARACHI BY-ELECTION. OBAIDUR REHMAN, JOINT CANDIDATE OF THE TEHRIK-I-ISTIQLAL (TIP) AND JAMIAT-UL-ULEMA-I-PAKISTAN (JUP), LOST HIS DEPOSIT. DESPITE THE VIOLENCE BETWEEN ALLANA AND HASAN SUPPORTERS WHICH RESULTED IN HASAN'S INCARCERATION, THE VICTORY OF THE GENUINELY POPULAR ALLANA WAS NEVER IN DOUBT; THE MASSIVE MARGIN WAS PROVIDED BY " BOGUS VOTERS" AND COMPLAISANT POLL OFFICIALS. END SUMMARY.

1. BACHGROUND: THE EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE DECEMBER 28 BY-ELECTION IN CONSTITUENCY PS-53/KARACHI VIII FOR A SEAT IN THE SIND ASSEMBLY WERE CURIOUS EVEN BY PAKISTAN ELECTORAL STANDARDS. THE CONTESTED CONSTITUENCY EMBRACES SOME 70,000 URBAN AND MOSTLY MIDDLE-CLASS VOTERS; THE LARGEST SINGLE GROUP AMONG THEM IS THAT OF THE SHIA ISMAILIS, FOLLOWED BY URDU-SPEAKING REFUGEES, PUNJABIS, AND PATHAN LABORERS. IN THE 1970 POLLING, LEFTIST REFUGEE CANDIDATE HASAN WON

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ON THE PPP TICKET WITH A PLURALITY OVER ALLANA OF THE QAIYUM MUSLIM

LEAGUE AND A JAMA'AT -I-ISLAMI (JI) NOMINEE. HASAN BROKE WITH THEN CHIEF MINISTER MUMTAZ BHUTTO IN MID-1972 OVER THE LATTER'S CHAMPIONING OF SINDHI AS THE OFFICIAL PROVINCIAL LANGUAGE. IN MAY 197

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THE SIND ELECTION TRIBUNAL OUSTED HASAN AND DECLARED ALLANA ELECTED. ALLANA, SON OF THE SINDHI INTELLECTUAL AND ISMAILI LEADER G. ALLANA, RECEIVED THE IMPORTANT EDUCATION PORTFOLIO FROM CHIEF MINISTER JATOI IN JANUARY 1974. A YEAR LATER, HE FORMALLY JOINED THE PPP. SIMULTANEOUSLY, HASAN COURTED MUMTAZ BHUTTO AND PURSUED THROUGH THE COURTS A PETITION AGAINST ALLANA; IN LATE NOVEMBER 1975 THE SUPREME COURT REVERSED THE HIGH COURT, WHICH HAD UPHELD THE TRIBUNAL, UNSEATED ALLANA, AND CALLED FOR A BY-ELECTION. JATOI PUBLICLY URGED THAT ALLAN BE TAPPED BY THE PPP; HASAN SOUGHT AND REPORTEDLY RECEIVED MUMTAZ BHUTTO'S HELP IN ATTEMPTING TO OBTAIN THE RULING PARTY NOMINATION.

2. THE NOMINEES AND THE CAMPAIGN: ON DECEMBER 5 PARTY CHAIRMAN ZULFIKAR ALI BHUTTO SELECTED ALLANA AS THE PPP NOMINEE. ALLANA PUT TOGETHER A CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE LED BY PROVINCIAL LEGISLATOR AND FORMER MINISTER HAJI KASSIM ABBAS PATEL, A MAJOR PARTY FUND-RAISER, AND BY SIND PPP CHIEF AND SENIOR MINISTER ABDUL WAHEED KATPAR, THE PRIME MINISTER'S CHIEF LOCAL OPERATIVE AND MOUTHPIECE. ALLANA'S CAMPAIGN WAS LOW-KEY THROUGHOUT; FEW CONTESTED KATPAR'S PREDICTION OF AN EASY VICTORY. HASAN, SPURNED BY THE PPP, ANGRILY ANNOUNCED HIS RESIGNATION FROM THE PARTY AND PROMISED, BUT NEVER PRODUCED, EARTH-SHAKING REVELATIONS. STRONGLY SUPPORTED BY SOME URDU-SPEAKING STUDENT AND LABOR LEADERS, HASAN MOUNTED A VIGOROUS CAMPAIGN. SEVERAL OF HIS SUPPORTERS WERE ARRESTED ON CHRISTMAS EVE FOLLOWING A CLASH WITH PPP MILITANTS IN WHICH MANY WERE INJURED. TWO DAYS LATER, HASAN ALLEGEDLY STOOD BY WHILE HIS ADHERENTS BURNED A BUS; HASAN WAS ARRESTED ALONG WITH THE MISCREANTS AND SENT TO JAIL, WHERE HE REMAINS. THE THIRD MAN, URDU-SPEAKING LAWYER OBAIDUR REHMAN, WAS PUT UP BY THE TIP AND SUPPORTED BY THE JUP. THE TIP, REVERSING ITS LONG-STANDING POSITION AGAINST CONTESTING BY-ELECTIONS, THUS WAS REPAID FOR ITS SUPPORT TO THE JUP CANDIDATE IN THE OCTOBER 19 KARACHI POLL (REFTEL). IN AN APPARENT BLUNDER, TIP STRATEGISTS BROUGHT IN RECENT CONVERT GOHAR AYUB TO ADDRESS FELLOW HAZARAWALS ON LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DECEMBER 11; URDU-SPEAKERS, REMEMBERING GOHAR'S PROVOCATIVE ROLE IN SPARKING THE 1965 POST-POLL KARACHI RIOTS, REPORTEDLY CHASED HIM AWAY. RAHMAN'S CAMPAIGN RECEIVED NO BOOST FROM THE FAILURE OF THE OPPOSITION'S EFFORTS TO MAKE DECEMBER 19 A "BLACK DAY", BUT PEAKED ON DECEMBER 21, WHEN TIP LEADER ASGHAR KHAN AND SENATOR NOORANI OF THE JUP ADDRESSED A WELL-ATTENDED MEETING IN KARACHI'S NISHTAR PARK. THEY ENTERTAINED THE CROWD WITH CRITICISM

OF BHUTTO'S CHARACTER AS WELL AS OF HIS POLICIES.

3. THE POLLING AND THE RESULTS: THE PROVINCIAL ELECTION COMMISSIONER ESTABLISHED 27 POLLING STATIONS, OF WHICH 11 WERE RESERVED FOR WOMEN. FEW DISTURBANCES WERE RECORDED DURING THE DECEMBER 28 POLLING, WHICH LASTED FROM 8:00AM TO 4:00 PM. ACCORDING TO RELIABLE SOURCES, MALE "BOGUS VOTERS" WERE TRANSPORTED TO THE CONSTITUENCY FROM AS FAR AWAY AS HYDERABAD TO VOTE FOR ALLANA; BURQA-CLAD VOTERS WERE BROUGHT IN FROM OTHER CONSTITUENCIES AS WELL. WHILE MOST POLL OFFICIALS REPORTEDLY CONDONED THIS FRAUDULENT HELP TO ALLANA, SEVERAL IN THREE URDU-SPEAKING PRECINCTS WERE SEEN TO AID HASAN. ACCORDING TO THE OFFICIAL RESULTS, ALLANA RECEIVED 31,979 VOTES AND CARRIED 24 POLLING STATIONS; HASAN GARNERED 5,845 BALLOTS; REHMAN WON ONLY 3,811 VOTES AND, ALONG WITH TWO INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES, LOST HIS ELECTION DEPOSIT.

COMMENT: THROUGHOUT THE RATHER DULL ELECTION CAMPAIGN, DOUBT CENTERED ONLY ON THE SIZE OF THE MARGIN BY WHICH THE URBANE, ABLE, AND POPULAR ALLANA WOULD WIN. IT WAS GENERALLY AGREED THAT ALLANA HAD WORKED HARD IN HIS CONSTITUENCY, WHILE HASAN HAD STEADILY LOST STRENGTH SINCE THEIR 1970 CONTEST. CLEARLY MUMTAZ BHUTTO'S COVERT SUPPORT TO HASAN WAS INSUFFICIENT TO OVERCOME ALLANA'S MANY ADVANTAGES; IF HASAN HOPED THROUGH ENCOURAGING VIOLENCE TO FORCE A POLL POSTPONEMENT, HE WAS OUT-MANEUVERED BY THE AUTHORITIES. THERE REMAINS THE QUESTION OF WHY THOSE IN POWER FELT IT NECESSARY TO SWELL ALLANA'S MAJORITY THROUGH FRAUD AND INTIMIDATION. SOME SAY THEY ACTED OUT OF HABIT, OTHERS MENTION A DESIRE TO IMPRESS BHUTTO WITH THEIR LOYALTY AND FOREIGN OBSERVERS WITH HIS POPULARITY, AND OTHERS CITE A COMPULSION TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OVERAWE THE POPULACE. WHATEVER THE REASONS, OFFICIAL HEAVY-HANDEDNESS SEEMS TO HAVE BECOME A PROMINENT FEATURE OF PAKISTANI POLLING.
MOORE

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